A Guide to the:

Yale University Library Microfilm Collection of the Gakaara wa Wanjau Papers

Dorothy C. Woodson (Yale University)
& Derek Peterson (University of Cambridge)

Introduction:

The items in this collection were filmed from photocopies of manuscripts and include, among other things, handwritten drafts of Gakaara wa Wanjau’s published work. There is also a large volume of speculative or experimental writing, much of it composed on the back of receipts, letters, and odd scraps of paper. In addition, the files contain most, but not all of Gakaara’s published works, along with materials published by his press. We have attempted to organize this material topically, but because Gakaara’s interests did not fall into neat compartments, these topical divisions are exceedingly artificial. Moreover, the largest percentage of this material is written on unnumbered pages. It has therefore not always been possible to ensure that drafted essays are complete. Most of the items are in Gikuyu though a significant number are in English or Kiswahili.

Copies of all items in this collection were made in Nyeri and Karatina, Kenya in the summer of 2002 with funding from the Yale University Library, which is also responsible for funding the microfilming of these 8,000 pages. The identification and actual collection of material from various locations in Kenya was conducted by Dorothy C. Woodson, Curator of the African Collection, Yale University Library; Ann Biersteker, Associate Chair, Yale Council on African Studies; and Kimani Njogu, Professor, Kenyatta University, Nairobi. Derek Peterson of Cambridge University and Dorothy Woodson created this finding aid. The originals are held by the family of Gakaara wa Wanjau and are housed in various location in Kenya.

The microfilm consists of six reels. The collection was filmed in the order presented below. Please address any questions or correction to Dorothy Woodson, African Collection, Yale University Library.
REEL 1

Texts about Gikuyu language

- “Arutani amwe kuhitira ruuriri” (Some teachers who helped the country)
- “Ndundu ya gukuria Giigikuyu” (The committee to expand Gikuyu language)
- Notes on Gikuyu spelling
- Notes on importance of reading Gikuyu
- “Ukuria wa mwandikire wa giigikuyu” (The growth of the writing of Gikuyu)
- “Kiama kia Uugi kiagiire atia”? (What is the council of Uugi?)
- “Gakaara gutigirwo wira”
- “Thooma Giikuyu kiega” (Read proper Gikuyu)
- Giigikiuyu gia TKK kurutwo mahitia (The Gikuyu taught in TKK is mistaken)
- “Ngathiiti ‘Mutiiri’ kwandikirwo America” (The newspaper ‘Mutiiri’ written in America)
- Miscellaneous text pages in Gikuyu

Ethnographic writings, drafts

- “Ndai na Gicaandi” (Excerpts from Merlo Pick)
- Iria (Milk)
- Draft introduction to “Mihirga ya Agikuyu”
- “Agikuyu nia?” (Who are the Gikuyu?), several drafts
- Notes on Gikuyu marriage
- “Uhunjia” (Preaching)
- Various essays on marriage customs
- “Ngurarro” (Meat-feast)
- “Njererekeire kirima gia Kirinyaga” (Facing the mountain of Kirinyaga)
- “Marebeta ma Gikuyu na Mumbi” (Wisecracks/aphorisms of Gikuyu and Muumbi)
- “Muguma: ihooero itheru ria Gikuyu” (The Mugumo tree), several drafts
- “Nyimbo na marebeta” (Songs and wisecracks)
- “Kihumo kia ygurani wa Aagikuyu” (The basis of bridewealth in Gikuyu)
- Notes on the Clans of the Gikuyu

Political texts regarding colonial and post-colonial Kenya

- “Witikio wa Gikuyu na Muumbi” (The creed of Gikuyu and Muumbi), 1952
- Notes from an undated political meeting
- “Amka Mwafrika!” (Wake up, African!) [KiSwahili]
- “Mahooya ma Mau Mau original” (The prayers of Mau Mau original)
- “Mau Mau, KANU na Gikuyu” (Mau Mau, KANU and Gikuyu)
- Draft text on KANU and Gikuyu history
- “Wonjoria witu” (Our leadership)
• “Ciana cia Mau ni Mau (The children of Mau Mau are Mau Mau)
• “Marua maria maatwariwo thirikaari ya ngeretha ruraaya” (Matters posed to the English overseas government)
• Mwathanire wa Thirikaari” (The law of the government)
• “Muthenya wa Kenyatta na wa Jamhuri” (Kenyatta day and Independence day)
• “Wimbo wa Kumkaribisha Kenyatta” (Songs of welcome for Kenyatta) [KiSwahili]
• Untitled tract on KANU (English)
• “Mawatho ma kiama kia GEMA” (Laws of the committee of GEMA) [not by Gakaara]
• “Mungiki: woni witu hari wandiki wa Gathiba ya Kenya” (Mugniki: our views on the writing of the constitution of Kenya)
• “Mungiki ni matigari a njirungi” (Mungiki are the patriots who survived the bullets), two drafts
• “Uurumwe wa Mungiki” (The courage of Mungiki)
• “Wetikirire atia kuuma kiamaini Cuaka KANU?!” [Handbill]

Historical writing

• Index to unknown book on Kenyan history
• “The KCA General Council”
• Notes on Gikuyu political history
• “Ndumiriri cia Aruiri wiyathi” (Messages of the fighters for self-mastery)
• Further notes on Gikuyu history
• Notes on Mathira history
• Text on history and cultural imperialism
• “Mití na mawira mayo” (Trees and their work)
• Short story about detention and Mau Mau
• “Wira wa Ateti no.1” (The work of politics number 1), 1997
• “Ucamba wa athuri a K.C.A.” (The defamation of the elders of the KCA)
• Text on late 19th century Gikuyu history
• Gikuyu historical text
• Gikuyu historical/ethnographic text
• Miscellaneous pages

Notes for “Agikuyu, Mau Mau na Wiyathi”

• Biographical notes on various Mau Mau leaders, including General Kariba
• Autobiographical notes concerning the author’s involvement in Gikuyu political life

Theological writing, especially concerning the “New book of the God of Kirinyaga”, late 1990s

• “Ibuku rieru ria Ngai riitagwo kwarahura muhoore wa Gikuyu na Mumbi” (The new books of God to guide the worshipper of Gikuyu and Mumbi)
• “Ciuria na macookio kuri Muugikuyu muukristu” (Questions and answers to a Gikuyu Christian)
• “Macookio” (miscellaneous pages)
• “Muugikuyu wicookie ndundu” (Gikuyu collect your thoughts?)
• “Uria Ngai endeete Gikuyu” (How God has loved the Gikuyu), two drafts
• Notes on Gikuyu religion
• “Ngai wa Kirinyaga ahaana atia?” (What is the nature of the God of Kirinyaga?)
• “Muugikuyu na Ngai wa Kirinyaga” (The Gikuyu person and the God of Kirinyaga)
• “Ciuria” (Questions on Gikuyu religion)
• “Mahooya matari nganja” (Prayers without doubts)
• “Kuriukia ndini ya Mugikuyu karing’a” (The spirit of the Gikuyu person)
• Various notes on Gikuyu religion
• Advertisement regarding “Wiktikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi” (The creed of Gikuyu and Mumbi)
• “Witikio muhooereini wa Gikuyu na Mumbi” (Creed: worship in the name of Gikuyu and Mumbi)
• “Witikio wakwa” (My belief)
• “Ngoro ya Muugikuuyu” (The spirit of the Gikuyu person), notes

Gakaara’s notes and notebooks
• Draft manual on business practice
• Historical and ethnographic notes
• Gakaara’s notebooks (2)
• Beer and prostitution (stray page)
• “Tiga Gwituira uria utataru” (Notes on psychology)
• List of books regarding Gikuyu
• “Aanake na airitu (Boys and girls), notes
• Cash book and jotting book on Mau Mau and detention
• Accounts book, with description of court case
• Misc. jotting

Biographies by Gakaara, mainly for funeral orations
• Draft text regarding “Wambui”, a youthful Mau Mau partisan
• Notes regarding Rev. Johana Wanjau
• Notes on Mathenge Waciira
• Notes on Samson Gichohi Guthuma
• Notes on Victor Murage Wokabi
• Notes on Raheli Warigia, Gakaara’s mother
• Rugano rwa Raheli Warigia wa Rev. Johana Wanjau (The story of Raheli Warigia of Rev. Johana Wanjau)

Gakaara’s fictional writings, drafts
• Gakaara’s notes for a musical production
• Draft story about marriage for “Gikuyu na Mumbi” magazine
• Untitled story regarding Daudi and Josephat
• “Biashara za wakina ‘Chupa na Debe’” (The business of ‘chupa na debe’) [KiSwahili]
• “I am with Nyarwimbo: dowry quarrel on the bus” [English]
• Draft story about Gathigira
• Story about a marriage [KiSwahili]
• “Nuu woragire maaitu?” (Who killed our mother?)
• Untitled MS about a character named Musa [KiSwahili]
• “Mugiikuyu Karinga” (The true Gikuyu)
• Plot for a story
• “Njitagwo wa Muthungu muiru” (Introduction to “The danger of the black European”)
• Untitled MS. [KiSwahili]
• Miscellaneous pages

REEL 2

Wa-Nduuta drafts
• “Wa-Nduuta na magongona moohoro tene ma Gikuyu” (Wanduuta and the old-time sacrifices of Gikuyu)
• Wa-Nduuta kwiyandikithia KANU (Wanduuta joins KANU)
• Wa-Nduuta guciarithia njira –ini (Wanduuta helps deliver a child on the pathway)
• Untitled and incomplete Wanduuta drafts

Various manuscripts by Gakaara
• “Mpango wa kupambana na unywaji wa pombe na umalaya” (The collision of beer-drinking and prostitution)
• “Ili utunze barua zakao” (So that you care for your letter) [KiSwahili]
• Draft of “Ili utunze barua zakao”
• “The Clans of the Gikuyu”, draft [English]
• “Usiyadharau maisha yako; A Radio Play” (Do not despise your life) [KiSwahili]
• “Nataka uniue” (I want you to kill me) [KiSwahili]
• “The wife who blamed herself: a play” [English]
• Untitled short story [English]
• Untitled story about an African clerk [English]
• Untitled short story [English]
• Untitled short story [English and KiSwahili]
• Draft pamphlet on Jomo Kenyatta
• “Mirario ya Gutiriha!” (Marriage advice)
• Booklet on how to succeed in life [English]
• Untitled manuscript [English]
• “Wamemshida Akili” [KiSwahili]

Gikuyu grammars
• Typeset grammar exercises
- Handwritten notes for grammar book
- Exercises for Gikuyu grammar book
- “Mabuku ma kurutana Giigiguyu Karing’a” (The book of teaching proper Gikuyu)
- “Thooma Giikikuyu kiega” (read proper Gikuyu), proofs
- “Mwandikire wa Gikuyu Karinga” (The writing of proper Gikuyu) draft
- “Kurunga na gukuria mwandikire wa ruthiomi rwa Gikuyu” (Straightening out of the Gikuyu tongue)
- Notes on Gikuyu consonants and their pronunciation
- Stray pages from a text on Gikuyu grammar
- Grammar exercises

Translations by Gakaara of other authors

- Translation notes, from Hobley’s “ethnography”
- Ezekiel Mphahlele, “Follow the laws of the government” [into KiSwahili]
- Another draft of the Mphahlele play

Illustrations

- Stray pages of uncertain origin

Untitled history of Kenya - (Possibly an Independence Day booklet and probably published by Gakaara) [in KiSwahili]

Untitled manuscript on cultural imperialism - (Author unknown) [in English]

Transalation of Gakaara’s work

- “Murutani wa Thiomi Ithatu Hamwe” (Teacher of three languages) [in Kidawida/Kitaita] Translations by Mwavizo wa Mchawia and Msae mka Mwavizo

Hymns

- “Nginya muthenya ucio” (Until that day)
- “Ni Nani Akiketa Majimbo” (Who has brought mujimbo-ism? And other songs)
- “Guthuutira mwana” (Singing to a baby)
- Untitled manuscript on Gikuyu songs and dances
- Draft manuscript on Gikuyu songs
- Notes on Gikuyu songs and music
- Untitled manuscript regarding music and song
- “Turwimbo twa twana” (The small songs of children)
- Christian hymnody, handwritten by Gakaara
- “Tiiri witu” (Our land)
- Stray pages

Proverbs – This filed consists of several hundred pages of proverbs in Gikuyu, most often without translation. Most of the proverbs are attributed to published sources, with page numbers and abbreviated titles listed.
REEL 3

Detention diary, manuscript and notes

- Dated notes, drawn from Mau Mau diary
- Recopied and edited version of Mau Mau detainee diary
- Notes for introduction to English translation of “Mau Mau Author…”
- Original diary kept while in detention

Plays written by Gakaara in detention at Athi River Camp

- “Reke acirithio ni mehia make” (Let his wickedness judge him), July 1956 [two copies]
- “Let his wickedness judge him” [English version of above]
- A nativity play: “Kuzaliwa kwa Bwana Yesu” (The birth of the Lord Jesus) [two copies]
- A farewell play: “Mungu akuweke hata tuonane” (God keep you until we see each other), July 1956

Manuscripts composed in detention

- Cast list for detention play
- Farewell concerts
- “Anti-Mau Mau songs”, Oct. 1956
- “Binti abubakar katufurufia mapenzi” [KiSwahili]
- “She must quit this home”, March 1955 [English]
- “She must quit this home”, December 1954 [English]
- Notes on play about oath-taking

Athi River Camp Manuscript

- John G. Wanjao, “Kumbe alikuwa dada yake” (So she was his sister), January 1957

Bible translations

- Numerous verses translated into Gikiyu

Odds and ends

- Numerous stray pages from collection

Correspondence Files

These files contain letters, memoranda, and other dated materials kept by Gakaara. They are organized chronologically. Materials included in these folios concern Gakaara’s business dealings, his family relationships, and his efforts to forward his publishing enterprise (especially after his release from detention in 1960).

Correspondence, 1948-1949

Correspondence, 1949-1951

Correspondence, 1951-1956 – (Mostly pertaining to a short story writing course Gakaara took while in detention at Manda Island)
Correspondence in detention, 1952-1960

Correspondence, 1959-1970

Correspondence, 1970-1980

REEL 4

Correspondence, 1980-1990

Correspondence, 1990-1999

Writing of Gakaara in Gikuyu (unless otherwise indicated) and published by Gakaara Book Service, Gakaara Publishing Service, or Gakaara Press

- “Gikuyu na Mumbi”, (Cover for his Gikuyu creed) 1952, 1p.
- “KANU niyo gitugi gia Kenya” (GPS publication, no. 3) [In Gikuyu and KiSwahili] 1960, 23p.
- “Marua maria maatwariirwo thirikaariya ngeretha ruraaya” 2000, 8p.
- “Mirimu ya kwiiirira” (“Inferiority complex”) 1979, 18p.
- “Mwandikire wa giigikuyu, karing’a; ibuku ria gatatu” 1996, 96p.
- “Mwandikire wa giigikuyu, karing’a; ibuku ria keeri” 1996, 72p.
- “Mwandikire wa giigikuyu, karing’a; ibuku ria mbere” 1996, 68p.
- “Ngwenda Unjurage” (“I want you to kill me”) n.d., 20p. (Gakaara’s first novel, incomplete)
- “Ni nii nzina nyarwimb; uthoni-wa haaro thinki wa mbaathi” (Atiriri series, No.1) 1966, 15p.
- “Nyimbo cia ihii” (Kikuyu youth dances) 1971, 61p.
- “Nyimbo za uhuru: lushiindi!” (GPS publication, no.2) 19--?, 16p.
- “Ugwati wa muthungu muiru” 19--?, 14p.
- “Wa-Nduuta hingo ya paawa” 1984, 44p.
- “Wimbo wa kumkaribisha Kenyatta” [In KiSwahili] early 1960s, 1p.

**REEL 5**

**Gakaara Press (and its various imprints) Publications** - General works not written by Gakaara in Gikuyu or English unless otherwise indicated.

- “He killed me softly” Grace N. Muchoki. 2nd ed. 1989, 36p.
- “Story of Wakikuyu” H.M. Kanja. (Tribal History Pamphlets No.1) 1946, 8p.
- “Twenty three letters: What is the secret behind them?” Charity Muthoni Mburu. 2nd ed. 1976, 32p.
Books and other items from Gakaara’s personal collection – (in Gikuyu or English unless otherwise indicated)

- “Moral Re-armament ni Kii” Bremer Hofmeyr. 11p.
- “Muturire wa unungi wa Jitegemea” James Gakunju Gathigi. 19--?, 19p.
- 11p. typescript concerning the Bible.

Gikuyu na Mumbi magazine – Edited by Gakaara wa Wanjau, Gakaara Press


**REEL 6**

Gikuyu na Mumbi Newspaper – Edited by Gakaara wa Wanjau, Gakaara Press

Number 2 (1972)

Number 3 – Number 13 (1973)

Number 14 – Number 20 (1974)

Number 23 (1974)
Assorted Newspapers in Gikuyu – (not published by Gakaara)

- *Coro; Ngathiti ya kunoora tombo*, Number 007, 1/2001, and Number 008, 2/2001
- *Nuru; Jarida la Mwangaza*, October 1994

Unpublished Manuscripts submitted to Gakaara – (in Gikuyu or English unless otherwise indicated)

- “His death that will separate us—the second part” (“Ni Gikuu gigatutigithania – gicunni gia keeri”) 13p.
- “Mieri miingi mutitu-ini-nariu nindaimuka” (“Many months in the forest; now I have returned”) Stephen N. Ndung’u, 124p.
- “Mumbi the beautiful girl” Ephantus Muriuki Mwangi and Murakaru Gakara, 98p.
- “Mwitemengeri ndoragia ikihooha” John K. Kiriungi, 180p.
- “One way of staying from olden times” (pp. 16-30 lacking), 45p.
- “Wendete mwendo waku atia?” (How have you loved your love?) N. Njuguna Nganga (pp. 23-30 lacking), 47p.
- (Untitled) Ndewga Maturi, 75p.