Laurentsia Shitindi, 23 years old and living in Sengerema District in Northwest Tanzania told me about her first experience with a new technology she had when visiting the small district hospital with her third pregnancy that she thought did not grow as the others had: “How can you be fooled? The doctor looked at the kioo [Kiswahili: mirror/screen, the word health care professionals and women used to refer to ultrasound; BMR], the mzungu [white person; BMR] looked at the kioo. I saw the water, much water. All around the child, I saw it swimming there. How can I know that it is water? […] He told me: ‘This is the child there, there is the body of the child.’ You could see it, the child was lying there on the left, and the rest was water only. […] This new machine it can truly see each and everything.”

In this chapter I try to trace the intertwining of technological images of the pregnant body, with the hopes, expectations, fears, and the sense of one’s own insides, in short of pregnant imaginations. I claim that both—ultrasound images and societal imaginations—are context-specific. More, I claim that context, content and the depicted objects—the body and that ‘within the body’—are co-produced and are mutually shaping each other. In order to show this, I have followed ultrasound to a place where it has not yet become a standard, inevitable part of every pregnancy: I have followed ultrasound on its travel into the life worlds of women in Northwest Tanzania. Here, a number of hospitals have been rather recently equipped with ultrasound machines through a Dutch development project aiming to reduce maternal and child mortality statistics in the wake of the Millennium Goals, geared towards improving the lot and lives of all people.

Laurentsia Shitindi’s story displays the fascination, shared by women in Northwest Tanzania and health care professionals likewise, for a machine that can “see each and everything”. Her story at first glance also bears resemblance to the experiences of women with ultrasound in ‘the West’, where ultrasound examinations have turned into ‘show-business’ enjoyed by both expecting parents and professionals: “there is
your baby; it is a girl; you see how she is yawning; and, doesn’t she look like grandmother?” Yet, as I will show in the following, ultrasound in Northwest Tanzania and the bodies depicted by it, are but deceptively familiar. Studying ultrasound in contexts beyond Europe and the United States, in which this imaging technology was originally designed and put to use, I aim to contribute to a growing body of work that studies how bodies are being done in practice (cf. Mol and Law 2004) rather than imagine them to be the same. Studying the pregnant body as mediated, that is, as an effect of certain politics, histories, institutions and culture, however, requires not only to open the womb but technology itself to empirical scrutiny. Unblackboxing both ultrasound technology and the body is crucial for understanding pregnancy experience, analyzing questions of (dis)embodiment, discussing women’s agency, and reflecting about the politics embodied in a technology that increasingly travels the globe, and by reaching far away places find new users and uses. Ultrasound may thus become a different thing in Tanzania, a low-income country where daily life is possibly more precarious and contingent, and political intervention in reproductive health more accidental than thoroughly planned. In turn, ‘the body within’ emerges as a situated set of practices and multiple genealogies.

**Shooting the fetus:**

*depicting women between alienation and agency*

Over the past decades, the body reproductive has re-emerged as a focus of anthropological interest. A number of innovative studies have explored how reproduction is embedded in culture, in politics and in economy, in science and technology, in art and in ads. In particular how reproductive technology has shaped experiences of conception, pregnancy, and childbirth, and how notions of kinship and gender have therefore been challenged are at the center of these writings (see e.g. Ginsburg and Rapp 1995; Saetnan et al. 2000). Research on ultrasound in pregnancy has thereby been the focus of feminist and anthropological work ever since the technology became common in health care in ‘the West’. During the 1980s, a large number of studies emerged from women’s and cultural studies that presented ultrasound and other reproductive technology as factors favoring and reproducing male and technocratic usurpation of realms that had been women’s stuff ‘by nature’ (see e.g. Petchesky 1987; Rothman 1993; Davis-Floyd 1992;