Afterword

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On Tuesday, August 18, 1925—just over one hundred years ago as I write this—a young elephant walked up to a teller at the Dime and Dollar Savings and Loan Association, then housed in the Seattle National Bank on the corner of Columbia Street and 2nd Avenue in downtown Seattle, Washington. In the elephant's trunk was a leather bag with $10 in coins. Standing beside the elephant was Charlie Becker, a performer with a vaudeville group known as Singer's Midgets who would eventually become more widely known as the Mayor of Munchkinland in the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. The man and the elephant were repeating a publicity stunt they had staged across the country. The idea of the less than four-foot-tall man walking into a bank with a small elephant to make a deposit was the sort of thing that could attract local newspapers, leading to essentially free advertising for the performances of Singer's Midgets.

At only about five years old, the elephant, who was then known as Ziggy, was already on at least his second name and more than third owner. Apparently caught in the wild and shipped to the US very young, Herman, as he was then known, enters known historical records in 1922 when he was sold by the Ringling Brothers Circus to Florenz Ziegfeld as a gift for his daughter Patricia on her sixth birthday. (In one of those strange historical circumstances, Patricia's mother was Billie Burke, the actress who played Glinda in the original *The Wizard of Oz* and thus worked beside Charlie Becker years later.) There are surviving photographs of Patricia with Herman—the little girl smiling broadly and happily and the elephant looking very thin. Within months, however, the elephant was returned to Ringling, who then sold him on to Leo Singer, the proprietor of the eponymous vaudeville act in which the elephant performed under his new name, Ziegfeld / Ziggy, for fourteen years. As Ziggy matured, like most male elephants travelling in circuses in the US at the time, he became increasingly difficult to handle. Faced with the predictable outcome of an eventual disaster, he was sold to the Brookfield Zoo, which had opened two years earlier in the suburbs of Chicago. Brookfield paid the substantial sum of $800 for Ziggy, and when the elephant arrived on July 28, 1936, the leaders of the zoo likely hoped

that they would have a large, male, tusked Asian elephant in the collection for many years.

Brookfield quickly hired George "Slim" Lewis from the Woodland Park Zoo to be Ziggy's trainer. Lewis had earned a reputation for being able to manage violent male elephants while travelling alone with the famous Tusko in the Pacific Northwest in the early 1930s. Tusko died at the Woodland Park Zoo in 1933, but Lewis stayed on until the call came from Brookfield. According to Lewis, shortly after he arrived in Chicago, he went into the new pachyderm house at Brookfield and "sailed into Ziggy in a fury". Within fifteen minutes, he claimed, Ziggy was beaten and lying on his side on the floor as Lewis fed him fruit by hand. Lewis had been able to beat a chained Ziggy into submission, but the battle between them persisted over the following years until, on 26 April 1941, Ziggy, in his outside paddock and in front of visitors, knocked down and tried to crush Lewis. Lewis was able to roll away and survived, but Ziggy was now considered too dangerous for anyone to handle, and he was chained in his stall inside the pachyderm house. For the next thirty years of his life—from 1941 to 1971—Ziggy was chained, often by multiple feet, to a wall in his inside stall. Able to take only a couple of steps, he mostly kept his back to the public, but for thirty years people came to zoo to marvel at what the zoo claimed to be the largest elephant in captivity.

One day in 1969, however, a newly hired young reporter for the Chicago *Tribune* named Michael Sneed happened to go to the zoo on her day off. She saw Ziggy and pitched a story to her editor. Sneed's article, "Rogue Elephant Roams No More; Rules Over Silence in Chains", was published on March 2, 1969, and Sneed's career, the zoo's future, and, to a degree, Ziggy's life all changed. Sneed's article was somehow the right piece at the right moment and captured the attention and imagination of readers. She wrote, "Ziggy's six-foot tusks, which once grew so long they crossed each other, now are decayed and broken. The once frequent majestic blasts from his huge trunk wail very rarely. He is one of the last of a species that may become extinct in captivity." The reaction of the public was swift. Over

the next weeks and months, letters of complaint flowed into the offices of the zoo and the newspaper, fundraisers were organized by children, and donations came from local businesses and even US soldiers fighting in Vietnam. More and more people, it seems, came to believe that somehow Ziggy should be "freed", by which most meant that he should be unchained and allowed to go outside. The *Tribune* kept up pressure with more articles and eventually the $50,000 that the zoo said would be needed to modify the building so Ziggy could be let outside was raised. Wondering whether Ziggy would even want to go out after so many years and reluctant to spend money without knowing what the animal would do if he could, the zoo organized a test in the fall of 1971. Lewis was brought back to the zoo out of retirement, and invitations were sent for an event covered in the national press and *Life* magazine. Ziggy slowly and cautiously left the building, still pulling a chain from one of his feet. A photographer caught the moment when the now over fifty-year-old elephant threw dirt over his back. As *Life* described the scene in its 22 October issue, "Ziggy now roams freely around his spacious backyard" and "justice was done at last".

Looking back, I'm not certain whether Ziggy's life changed much after that day. Nine months later he was given more regular access to a small outside yard and a year after that, on 4 July 1973 (Independence Day), the zoo got articles in the papers about Ziggy's chains finally being removed. In fact, Ziggy was still regularly chained, but it is also true that the chains were not always there. His stall also received some sprucing up. The bare concrete walls and iron doors were transformed into a sort of diorama with murals depicting a bucolic scene of hills and dales—a landscape devoid of both humans *and* elephants—and an iron bar across the front of the stall was made to look like a fallen tree. It probably doesn't need to be said, but Ziggy would certainly not have thought he was living in the quiet countryside. Then one day in March 1975, Ziggy fell into a dry moat at the front of another inside stall. With the help of a towtruck and a ramp made of gravel, he was able to climb out, but the keepers could see his physical decline. Describing his problems as age-related, the zoo's director said he was not surprised when Ziggy

finally lay down and died on 27 October 1975. At about 55 years of age, Ziggy was an older elephant (especially for a zoo elephant), but he wasn't an old elephant.

While reading the contributions to this collection — being introduced to the stories of Arikomban, Kalloor Komban and Soorya; Pu Htay and Ngwe Maung; Avi and others; reading the wrenching study of the Poncet brothers, the Pethericks, and Samuel Baker; and becoming more aware of how we travel today on pathways established over millennia by others — I found my thoughts returning to Ziggy and also to a chilly day in January 2012 when I came across his bones in several storage cabinets at the Field Museum in Chicago. The label on the double-doored, compact storage cabinets read:

Proboscidea
Elephantidae
Ziggy 60601

The off-white cabinets (the Pantone colour they are closest to in my memory is called "Papyrus") hold most of Ziggy's skeleton; his skull — minus his tusks, mandible, and a molar — rests upside-down on a large wooden platform nearby. I had gone to the Field Museum to photograph the elephant bone collection as part of research on elephant graveyards and was not specifically looking for Ziggy's remains. The label on the cabinet caught my attention, though, and pointed to an important thing about elephant bone collections in museums. Because the provenance of specimens matters so much — it is a large part of what makes specimens like these scientifically useful — who the bones come from is typically noted in labels and registers when the information is known. In this case, the bones are not simply the skeleton of a specimen of *Elephas maximus*, they are Ziggy's bones.

Throughout this special issue, the authors have sought to bring forward the presence, expressiveness, distinctiveness, and agency of elephants. Especially over the last centuries, as Jonathan Saha observes, elephants have been "knotted into coloniality", and that fact is part of the reason why accounts of them have so often focused on

their importance as labour and commodities, as objects of amusement, education, science, and conservation. Even accounts of elephants resisting our control seem to stem from how they are "knotted" into our ideas of power and control. The authors here ask that we see elephants as more than their interactions with humans, as beings that leave marks on the world irrespective of whether we see those marks or not. Elephants continue to live in the world, and while, as Cherry Leonardi argues, we distort their lives, thoughts, and expressions, they nevertheless do continue to speak—our task now is to listen.

The cover of the 1971 *Brookfield Guide*, the guidebook to the zoo, shows a colour, ¾-view photograph of Ziggy, standing on grass in his outside paddock. He looks out to us with the tip of his right tusk resting on the ground and the end of his trunk curled into the grass. We can see the remaining half of his other, shattered tusk; his legs appear columnar and stiff. For what it is worth, to me, he looks weary. The text in the guide informs readers that "Indian elephant bulls may reach 11 feet in height and a weight of 6 tons, but this is exceptional. Brookfield's animal 'Ziegfield' is the largest Indian elephant in any zoo and over 55 years old. Ziggy's unruliness caused him to be chained inside for almost 30 years, but as the cover photo attests, he has been granted a pardon." In the guidebook for visitors to the zoo, "Brookfield's animal" has had his name misspelled and his age overstated; using carceral language, it suggests that Ziggy has been forgiven and can now live his old age in freedom.

As Mary Midgely would have pointed out, Ziggy did not spend thirty years chained to a wall because he didn't matter to the zoo. He, like all the elephants in this collection, experienced the difficulties and, honestly, horrors of his life because he mattered so much. That is one of the most important lessons, I think, of so much of the work in this collection and why it, too, matters.