

of the orangutan is clearly supportive of this "missing links for apes" hypothesis.

This new hypothesis could prove to be a major blow to the popular belief that scientists have the fossil evidence to prove humans are descended from apes. From 1912 through the early 1950s, the Piltdown Man was the missing link. But he was a hoax. From 1953 to 1982, the two missing links were *Ramapithecus* and *Australopithecus africanus*. We now have indications that they are only the ancestors of the orangutan and possibly the chimpanzee and the gorilla. Missing links have been found, to be sure, but they appear to be links in the chain leading to modern apes, not to humans.

But let's give the paleoanthropologists credit for not calling the australopithecines human beings. They called them hominids or near-man. Listing them in man's direct ancestry as the missing link may prove to be their major error.

Furthermore, Johanson removed *Australopithecus africanus* from the main trunk of his postulated family tree when he replaced it with Lucy. And Lucy -- *Australopithecus afarensis* -- might still be a possible candidate for both the ancestor of human beings and the chimpanzee. Johanson says that Lucy's pelvic bones are closer to the human line than to that of apes. However, his impression of Lucy's reconstructed skull indicates otherwise: "Rather, (forgetting its hominid teeth), it looked very much like a small female gorilla."¹⁴ When we examine a photograph of those teeth (see figure 10.12), the jaw structure of *A. afarensis* (Lucy) appears to be much closer to that of a



FIGURE 10.12.

The upper jaws and teeth of *Australopithecus afarensis* (Afar ape), center, are more similar to those of a chimpanzee, left, than to those of a human, right. This comparison is true for the entire skull. The pelvic bones of the Afar ape-man more closely resemble those of humans. (Courtesy Cleveland Museum of Natural History.)