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POSING QUESTIONS

By **RUSSELL SCOTT SMITH**



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November 3, 2003 -- IT'S not easy being a celebrity - what with all those premieres, parties, and miles upon miles of red carpets lined with hordes of photographers. But every time those cameras flash, they seem to catch the stars in the same odd poses, over and over.

Witness Sarah Jessica Parker, brushing her hair off

her face.

Or Nicole Kidman, nervously clasping her hands.

Or the ever-ironic Jack Black, arching just one eyebrow mockingly.

So The Post asked one of America's top **body-language** researchers to give us the scoop behind these poses.

"Repetitive postures like these are subconscious giveaways," says Patti Wood, the author of "Success Signals."

"They come from the more primal part of the brain, so even if they're under conscious control, they also may be something the stars can't stop."

Arnold Schwarzenegger

The thumbs-up gesture is typical among politicians, and California's new governor has taken to it with gusto. "He's got this subconscious, primal **body language**," Wood says. "Look at that victorious open mouth. It's like he's just bitten down on someone."

Halle Berry

Please, please, no applause, Berry seems to be saying with this two-hands-up gesture. "It's both a sign of surrender and also a sign that she's in a position of power," Wood says. "Ultimately, though, she's trying to protect herself, I think. It

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shows the shy part of Halle's personality."

Jack Black

No one clowns quite like the "School of Rock" ham, whose large repertoire of funny faces includes the "I'm gonna get ya" scowl, the "Rock on!" roar (usually coupled with a "horns of the devil" gesture) and this "Bond, James Bond" eyebrow raise. "He likes to shock," Wood says. "You can't take your eyes off of him."

Sarah Jessica Parker

The "Sex and the City" star probably started brushing the hair out of her eyes out of necessity, but "it has become a comfort to her," says Wood. "People always touch themselves when they're nervous. A man will fiddle with his watch, and a woman will touch her forehead like Sarah is doing. It's comforting - a reminder of mother's touch."

Renée Zellweger

Zellweger "thinks her back is the prettiest part of her body," Wood says. "Renée has developed this pose to show off her cute rear end. She probably did it once and it got a cheer. Now it's like a Pavlovian response - she does it again and again because it works."

Paris Hilton

"This is what I call a Playboy pose," Wood says. "Women put this on to say, look at this famous, rich man I'm with. But it has nothing to do with tenderness or affection for the guys. Paris is very posed and her smile is stiff. She's using these men like accessories. And look at the way her knuckles are arched against Jack Osbourne's chest. It's like she's saying, 'Ooh, yuck!'"

Nicole Kidman

Notice how the Best Actress Oscar- winner is covering a certain part of her body in these pictures, points out Wood. "She's protecting her sexual parts from view," says Wood. "It's a pose of primness, especially with the way she keeps her legs so close together. It could have to do with her sexual orientation or could show a lack of comfort with her sexuality."

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