"I DON'T think the 'seventies can be very exciting for some of the current stars," said Pete Townshend in his suite at the Century Plaza Hotel last week.

"They're always ringing me up to invite me out. They obviously think that I'm more fun than the 'jet set.' Alice Cooper invited Keith out for a game of golf the other day, and said he's got no friends. Mick Jagger's constantly entertaining Ronnie Lane. Ronnie says he's the most down-to-earth guy in the world. So there's obviously a need for sanity somewhere."

Sanity seemed present in Townshend's two-room suite—despite the fact that he was sharing it with a half dozen brown leather suitcases (a gift from a U.S. promoter), tape recorders, headphones, and various other crates that gave the rooms an appearance of housing an entire vaudeville troupe rather than one rock star.

Peter, dressed in a conservative ensemble of light blue shirt and black wool trousers, climbed through the suitcases and sat down at a small breakfast table in one corner of the room. On the table was a copy of Spike Milligan's "Hitler" book and a half empty bottle of Remy Martin.

DECADE OF POP

"You know," he said, "you start to think—is it really ten years?! Our first record was made in 1964, *I'm The Face*—I think it was made in late '64. But we formed really as a band—Keith joined in 1963, so we are getting round to our ten-year cycle. And that makes one look back. "Quadrophenia" was the culmination of a lot of that kind of thinking; in that it's about the 1960s and the ten years of our career, involves us in it and involves us as a device.

"I'm now contemplating never writing anything like that again. I felt that it was important that we shouldn't get lost somehow, not in any rush—I mean I'm as anxious as anybody else for the next explosion to come along . . . but so we don't get caught up in that Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, Little Richard syndrome. I find that very scary.

"I just don't want to be standing onstage playing the old tunes," Townshend continued. "Sometimes it hurts to play *My Generation*, I sometimes announce it as . . . you know . . . 'Our Generation'."

Discussing the upcoming film production of "Tommy" with Ken Russell, Townshend smiled: "In a moment of insanity I offered to re-do the music for the film which will start right after this tour. So as soon as I get back I want to write some additional material. But I don't know . . . I've never seen anybody that I really respect ever take a piece of music of their own and re-vamp it and re-work it without something going wrong

TOMMY ON FILM

. . . It never seems to work. I'm very anxious that what I do should be a reaction to 'Tommy' as though from a completely different position. I think that it's long enough ago that it will evolve in a really good and exciting way. See, the other thing is there never ever was a rumoured live album of 'Tommy,' and so there's nothing on record which represents the tail end of the Who's evolving 'Tommy.'

"Russell and I have already talked a fantastic amount. I've had lots of scripts from people, but this was the one that was right. He's so right that there really wasn't that much I wanted to say."

As Peter talks there's a knock on the door, it's three young girls who are asking for concert tickets. Peter gives them tickets and they scream and hug and kiss him. He closes the door and comes back into the room grinning. "They're great, those kids. They did the whole thing just now about an hour ago when I said: 'Yeah, I'll give you some tickets,' so I got it twice! Never happened to me when I wanted it to happen . . . when I was a young man . . .

MIDDLE AGED

"I suppose I feel about as old as I am," Peter said in response to the obvious question. "I feel sort of approaching middle age. I'm twenty-eight, and a lot of my friends are like—well, one of my friends came to see me the other day and he said he was thirty. I couldn't believe it, I always thought he was younger than me for a start. You always think your audience is younger.

"It doesn't really seem to matter as much as I used to think it would. I mean when I was about nineteen I wasn't exactly afraid of old age but I was very angry about it. I was angry that I was going to get old. And I knew also that I was gonna even out a lot.

"It's really great to be in a rock band because you have an excuse to behave like an adolescent all the time, and everybody applauds.

"I like to try and get out and go to ballrooms and hear what records are being played and see which ones get people up. Then again, I feel completely alienated by some things that are happening in the rock business. The fact that in Britain, for example, a pop music group has an audience age range from three years old to seventeen . . . or another one has an audience from fifteen to forty. And that's a bit peculiar—because if you're part of one then you can't be part of another. It excludes my own kids from enjoying what *I* do—at four and a half years old they think David Cassidy is amazing, they like his music, listen to it and enjoy it.

AUDIENCE SPLIT

"There definitely seems to be more of a split in Britain; or less shame in America of emulating your older teenagers.

"In Britain that's really considered a sin—you just don't copy your big brother. You wear different clothes, you do something different. And if you haven't really got something to say you try as best as you can to just disappear completely."

Townshend sniffs a bit at the mention of the star syndrome in Britain, he claims that he doesn't relate to a "star" thing, someone you go to see to look at as well as—or perhaps instead of—to listen to. As far as the upcoming film, or future television, videotape projects are concerned, Peter said that he'd reserve judgment until he starts work on "Tommy."

"I've never really been in on the making of a film from start to finish. If 'Tommy' does nothing else other than drag me back yet again to the industry charisma that surrounds it, at least it will teach me a bit about the making of a film. You know—I make films, I've got a camera, I know how it's done. But I don't know . . . it's not something that comes naturally to me. And if it doesn't come naturally, I don't want to force it."

Talking about his home life and his family, Townshend smiled and said: "You know it's hard—being on the road, in the recording studio, doing gigs, being, in inverted commas, a rock star and having a wife who believes, quite correctly, that when I come home I should do my share of domestic duties and she's not in any way impressed by how wonderful I am, what a genius I am. She thinks I've had my romp.

"We're not going to get someone to look after the kids—and there's two of us, we can split it. So, now I've got to put in my four years. I'm looking forward to four years of baby sitting and she's going to study to be a teacher.

PRECOCIOUS CHILD

"My oldest child is four-and-a-half but she's quite precocious, naturally, and occasionally she says things that just indicate we're in for a fantastic amount of trouble. But I think by that time I might be able to handle it . . . I like to think of myself as the liberal father of two daughters and won't bat an eyelid and just sit there in my library.. I don't know, I hope I'm gonna be all right. I think of my kids as more people . . ."

Until they bring the musicians home at age 16 to 17. "Yeah!" Peter Townshend laughs.