

## Notions abordées : Mythes et héros & Espaces et échanges

An interview with David Barnes by Shelly De Vito

British and US Voices

# Spoken Word and the Beat Generation

**Shelly:** Spoken word is a performance art that is word-based, spoken word based. It was often used by members of the Beat Generation. For those of you who don't know the Beat Generation, or have only heard bits about the Beat Generation, it was a generation started in the 50s and 60s, and it carries on in a sort of bohemian tradition, that idea that you can ramble that you can move forward in quests for enlightenment. In the studio today, we have a Paris-based writer, and he has been influenced by the Beat Generation: David Barnes.

The Beat Generation comes to mind when you think of the spoken expression. Do you find more times than not when people are expressing themselves they tend to go towards a beat rhythm, or is it really a mixture of everything?

**David:** No, it's a mixture of everything; there's far more rhythm comes from slam now. Slam is very close to hip-hop, and has... tends to have a certain stereotype kind of rhythms that you hear a lot in that... but then there's the whole other range of poetry which is, you know, anything from... well, you name it, you know, like Shakespearean-type poetry, Bob Dylan-type, "Howl" lyrics or something, or whatever; yes, you know English is very good for rhythm and sound and performance; it should be spoken.