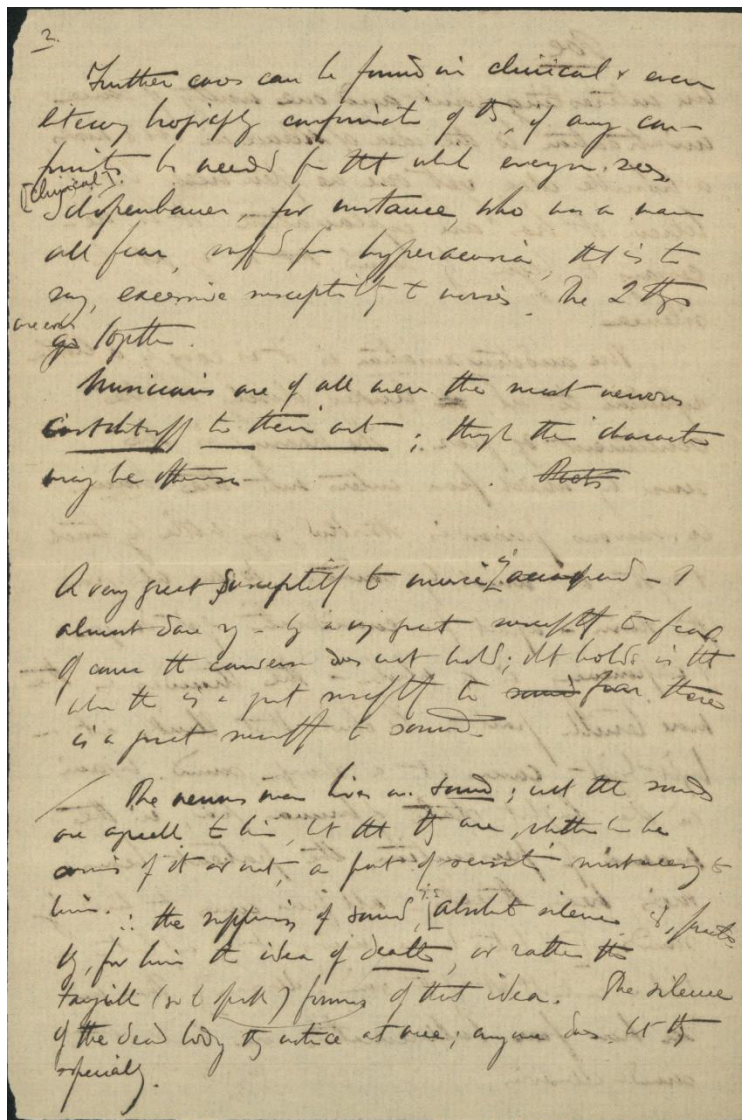


Poe.

An interesting point and one worthy of some investigation is the idea of silence in Poe's works, a horrible idea, yet one he often uses. Yet I believe it has an explanation. It is necessary to begin by sound that we may get to silence.

The auditory sensation is, it is easy by a little reflection to see, ~~the~~ linked closely to the sentiment of fear. The hearing is the sense by which fear enters into the brain ^(mind). A nervous person is startled, very little by touch and sight, and much by sound. To one who fears the storm - apart from consideration of its danger and impotency in a whole - the thunder is the more terrible part. A child that blinks at a bright light cowers at a sharp sound. Again in the highest state of human fear, in the mania of persecution, the patient hears voices, hears threats - all fear comes to him by sounds. [If later he sees visions, it is only later and I believe constructed out of the sound-illusions]. Thus we see how fear-hallucinations are linked to sound-illusions.

(But there are visions -)



Further cases can be found in clinical and even literary biography confirmation of this, if any [clinical] confirmation be needed for that which everyone sees. Schopenhauer, for instance, who was a man all fear, suffered from hyperacusia, that is to say, excessive susceptibility to noises. The 2 things go are ever together.

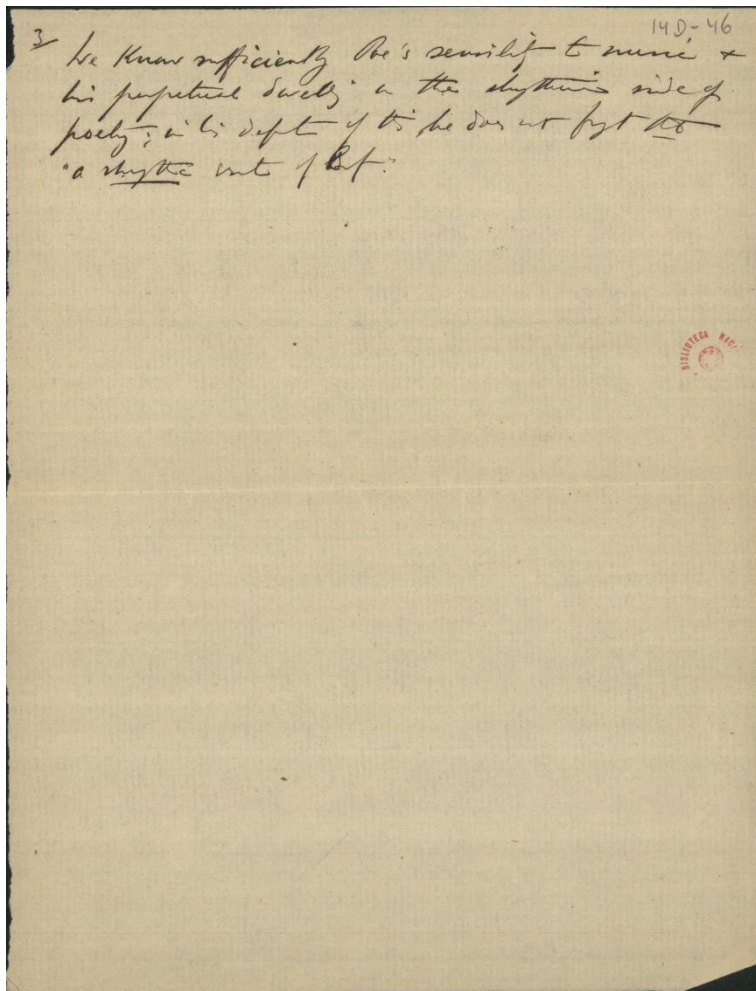
Musicians are of all men the most nervous constitutionally to their art; though their character may be otherwise, {...}

Poets

A very great susceptibility to music is accompanied - I almost dare say - by a very great susceptibility to fear. Of course the converse does not hold; what holds is that when there is a great susceptibility to sound fear there is a great susceptibility to sound.

The nervous man lives with sound; not that sounds are agreeable to him, but that they are whether he be conscious of it or not, a part of sensation most necessary to him.

Therefore the suppression of sound, i.e. absolute silence is, practically, for him the idea of death, or rather the tangible form (so to speak) of that idea. The silence of the dead body they notice at once; anyone does, but they especially.



We know sufficiently Poe's sensibility to music and his perpetual dwelling on the rhythmic side of poetry; in his definition of this, he does not forget that "a rhythmic creation of Beauty."

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