ROUSSEAU'S SOCRATIC
AEMILIAN MYTHS

A Literary Collation
of
EMILE
and the
SOCIAL CONTRACT

By Madeleine B. Ellis

Ohio State University Press : Columbus
ROUSSEAU'S SOCRATIC AEMILIAN MYTHS
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In this illuminating study of two literary milestones in the history of our civilization, a noted Rousseau scholar examines for the first time the nature of, and the inspiration for, the symbolic language that informs Rousseau's two great masterworks. Though Rousseau himself, in the pedagogical novel, invites such a study by including an aesthetic profession of faith and by warning the reader more than once that he is using the language of symbolic expression, Rousseauist criticism has, beyond noting the presence of a few symbols in *Emile*, produced as yet no systematic inquiry into the emblematic conveyance of ideas therein.

Professor Ellis's scrupulous collation of the texts of the two books and her adroit use of the Old and New Testaments and the Platonic dialogues reveal for the first time that not only is the *Social Contract* an "appendix" to *Emile*, as Rousseau says it is, but also that the two together constitute a Rousseauist version of Plato's *Republic* and *Symposium* transfigured by Judeo-Christian and biblical tradition. Although once again Rousseau himself invites such a comparison by calling both Christ and Socrates, or Plato, his "master," a distinction he accords to no one else, scholars have consistently ignored this invitation as they have the first. Dr. Ellis's study conclusively demonstrates that the imagery of these ancient writings, which is also Rousseau's, is the real clue to the relationship between the pedagogical novel and its political appendix. She cites as but one example that, in the *Republic*, Socrates also tells a "story" about the education of heroes and, moreover, includes a political treatise as well, the two being one and the same treatment of citizenship. Socrates' objective is Rousseau's: to portray man's nature and duties, and to describe the nature of justice

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TO MY MOTHER
LILIAN FITZMAURICE ELLIS
THE COMPANION OF MY LIFE AND OF MY WORK
THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED