

# The Anarchist Abstractionist Who Was Alexander Grothendieck

Alexander Grothendieck was one of the greatest mathematicians of the 20th century. He made fundamental contributions to algebraic geometry, number theory, and topology. He was also a committed anarchist and pacifist.

Grothendieck was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1928. His parents were Russian Jewish immigrants who had fled the Soviet Union. Grothendieck's father was a mathematician, and his mother was a pianist. Grothendieck showed an early aptitude for mathematics, and he began studying the subject at the University of Montpellier in France at the age of 16.



## The Anarchist Abstractionist: Who Was Alexander Grothendieck? by L. J. Smith

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Grothendieck's early work focused on algebraic geometry. In the 1950s, he developed a new theory of schemes, which provided a unified framework for studying algebraic varieties. This work had a profound impact on

algebraic geometry, and it is considered one of the most important mathematical developments of the 20th century.

In the 1960s, Grothendieck turned his attention to number theory. He developed a new theory of motives, which provided a way to understand the relationship between algebraic geometry and number theory. This work was also highly influential, and it has led to new insights into some of the most fundamental problems in number theory.

In the 1970s, Grothendieck became increasingly involved in political activism. He was a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War, and he also spoke out against the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia. In 1970, he resigned from his position at the Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques in Paris in protest against the French government's support for the Vietnam War.

After resigning from the IHES, Grothendieck lived a nomadic life. He traveled to India, Africa, and South America, where he worked with local mathematicians and activists. He also wrote extensively about mathematics, politics, and philosophy.

Grothendieck died in 2014 at the age of 86. He left behind a legacy of groundbreaking mathematical research and a commitment to social justice. He is remembered as one of the most important and influential mathematicians of the 20th century.

### **Grothendieck's Anarchism**

Grothendieck's anarchism was deeply rooted in his experiences as a child. He grew up in a family that was persecuted by the Nazis, and he witnessed

firsthand the horrors of war. He was also influenced by the writings of anarchist thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin and Emma Goldman.

Grothendieck believed that the state was a tool of oppression and that it should be abolished. He also believed that capitalism was a system of exploitation that created inequality and injustice. He argued that a truly free and just society would be one that was based on self-management and mutual aid.

Grothendieck's anarchism was not just a theoretical belief. He lived his life in accordance with his principles. He refused to accept any form of authority, and he always spoke out against injustice. He also worked to create alternative, self-managed communities.

### **Grothendieck's Abstractionism**

Grothendieck's abstractionism was closely related to his anarchism. He believed that the world could not be understood through abstract categories and that the only way to truly understand it was to engage with it directly.

This approach is reflected in Grothendieck's mathematical work. He was always interested in finding the most general and abstract way to formulate a problem. However, he also believed that it was important to apply these abstract ideas to concrete problems.

Grothendieck's abstractionism is also evident in his writings on politics and philosophy. He argued that it was impossible to create a perfect society on paper. Instead, he believed that we should focus on creating real, lived alternatives to the existing system.

### **Grothendieck's Legacy**

Alexander Grothendieck was a brilliant mathematician, a committed anarchist, and a visionary thinker. He left behind a legacy of groundbreaking mathematical research and a deep commitment to social justice. He is remembered as one of the most important and influential figures of the 20th century.



Alexander Grothendieck

## Further Reading

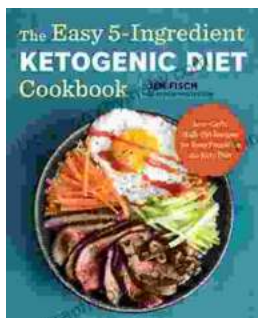
- Alexander Grothendieck on Wikipedia
- The Anarchist Abstractionist by Sylvain E. Cappell and Vladimir I. Snaith
- The Grothendieck Circle



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