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Perelman disproves Wiles' proof of Fermat's Theorem

By the CNN Wire Staff

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In a stunning move yesterday, the University of Moscow announced that famed reclusive mathematical genius Grigori Perelman, during the course of checking Andrew Wiles' proof of what is commonly known as Fermat's Last Theorem, found an error in one of the theoretical calculations. That mistake renders Wiles' proof of the infamous, nearly 400-year old theory utterly null and void.

"I'm utterly and completely shocked," said Alexei Bronislavovich Sossinsky, a professor of Knot Theory at the University of Moscow who has begun checking Perelman's work, who spoke through an interpreter. "This will change mathematics as we know it."

Fermat's Last Theorem, made famous by a NOVA video chronicling Wiles relentless, nine-year search to prove it, has a storied history. The crux of the theory states that no three positive integers a , b , and c can satisfy the equation $a^x + b^x = c^x$ for any integer value of x greater than two. Fermat wrote in the margin of one of his books that he had a proof for this theory, but did not have enough room with which to write it out. From this storybook beginning, hundreds of mathematicians over the following three hundred-plus years attempted to prove it. Wiles' was regaled as a national hero for his supposed proof, which he released after nine years of intense, secluded research.

Nonetheless, Perelman appears to have put the proof back to stage one. Perelman has gained worldwide notoriety for solving the Poincare projection just a few weeks ago, but refusing the \$1 million dollar amount associated with the Millenium Prize Problems award that went along with solving it. Perelman was also famous for refusing to leave his home in Moscow to accept a Fields medal, the mathematics equivalent of the Nobel Prize. Perelman could not be reached for comment.

Flying in from Cambridge, Massachusetts, a trio of highly renowned mathematicians from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology landed in Moscow late Tuesday night. Professors David Vogan, Gigliola Staffilani, and Steven Johnson made the trip into Moscow on a last-minute plane to help sift through what could be a monumental blow to the basis of a highly touted theory.

"What we're looking at here is something to rival the Poincare projection," Johnson, the associate professor of applied mathematics said. "This could potentially strike a deep blow to the heart of Wiles' proof, and though it really is not useful to modern mathematics, Fermat's Last Theorem has always been intriguing; frankly, it would be a shame to see Wiles' work wasted."

Though the exact mistake in Wiles' proof has not yet been released, a University of Moscow official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told CNN reporters that it had to

do with Wiles' work with the Taniyama-Shimura-Weil conjecture. The professor spoke on condition of anonymity due to the University of Moscow's moratorium on official releases or leaks until Perelman's work is validated.

The highly mathematical paper will be released to the public sometime in the coming weeks. The entire mathematics staff at the University of Moscow, in conjunction with the three mathematicians from MIT, have put side projects on hold to double and triple-check Perelman's finding for "as long as it takes," one University of Moscow professor said. So far, early indications are that Perelman's proof is sound.