This is a line-drawing question on the DVD, “Incident at Morales.”

Please read section 2.5 of the textbook, especially pp. 31-33, which focuses on organizational causes of accidents. The Columbia Accident Investigation Board spoke of the organization and culture of NASA as a cause of the accident. It concluded that the organization and culture of NASA had as much to do with the accident as the physical cause (the foam hitting the External Tank.) If organizations can be causes of accidents, then it is reasonable to assume that they can also be morally culpable or worthy of blame for accidents.

Some theorists believe that it is also reasonable to think of corporations as moral agents. The law thinks of them in this way, and on page 33, there is a discussion of the ways in which Peter French, a moral theorist, thinks that organizations can be morally responsible agents. These are very general and theoretical points, and they may or may not be relevant to the question that we want you to consider.

The question we want you to consider is this: **To what extent is Phaust (NOT the parent firm Chemistre) morally culpable or blameworthy for the death of Manuel?**

Answer this question with a line-drawing analysis. List five features which Phaust would have if it were a paradigm case of a firm that could be morally blamed for the death of Manuel. Then compare this paradigm with the actual nature of the firm, as you know it or assume it to be. If you do not know what the firm was like in a particular respect, you must resolve this factual issue by making some assumptions that are reasonable, and to which you hold consistently. You should make the typical line-drawing chart in which you compare the paradigm case to the test case. You should also indicate which one or two of the features you consider most important.

Your chart should be accompanied by a narrative in which you explain and justify the features, show why you placed the “x’s” at the particular place on the line, and then come to some overall conclusion as to the extent of moral culpability of the firm.

Grading: 1 point for each of the five features and why they are important. 3 points for a conclusion in which you placed each of the “x’s” as you did on the line, and what your overall conclusion is regarding the culpability of the firm. 2 points for writing and the TA’s general evaluation of your essay. (Total of 10 points.)

It will be helpful to remember the following points in constructing your analysis. First, keep in mind that this is a use of line-drawing to determine whether Phaust falls under the concept of a morally blameworthy corporation.” Second, remember that there are varying degrees of moral culpability or blame for something. Third, you are focusing on Phaust, not Chemistre. The extent to which Phaust was constrained by directives from the parent firm can be a morally excusing condition, but an organization may also have a
responsibility to protest immoral constraints. Fourth, moral culpability can be based on what an organization does not do, as well as what it does. Fifth, a copy of the DVD is available on the class website, if you want to look at it again.

The essay should be no more than four double-spaced, typewritten pages, and it is due at the recitation section on Friday, September 24.

Before you give the essay to your TA, submit it to turnitin.com.

See http://itsinfo.tamu.edu/tunitin/students.htm for details on how to set up your turnitin.com account. You will need to create an account before your paper will be accepted by the system. After creating an account, use the following ID and password to submit your paper:

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Please refer to this guide if you have questions.