Contradictory and Contrary

Any two sets of presuppositions, or more simply, any two statements, are contradictory if it can be said neither that both are true, nor that both are false. That is, if one of them is true, then the other must be false. They contradict each other. An example of a pair of contradictories is:

1. The world was created.
2. The world was not created.

If 1 is true then 2 must be false; if 2 is true then 1 must be false. They cannot both be true at the same time, nor can they both be false at the same time.

Any two sets of presuppositions or any two statements are said to be contrary if they cannot both be true but they can both be false. An example of a pair of contraries would be:

1. The world was created by the Greek god Zeus alone.
2. The world was created by the Norse god Thor alone.

Both 1 and 2 cannot be true at the same time, but both can be false—if, for example, it is true that the world was created by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Thomas V. Morris, Francis Schaeffer's Apologetics: A Critique, Chicago: Moody Press, 1976, 20; Excerpt from Part 1: The Apologetic Writings of Francis Schaeffer, Chapter 1: The Pre-evangelistic, Presuppositional Argument)