Ethnicity—once the preserve of anthropologists and folklorists studying disappearing tribal and peasant cultures—has become an important element in the models and explanations of a broader community of social scientists seeking to comprehend post-Cold War social disorder. But is ethnicity equivalent to variables such as resource competition or poverty? Ethnicity can be viewed as an epiphenomenon. The argument has major consequences for the way ethnic conflicts are analyzed and resolved. The article considers neo-Durkheimian conceptual tools for uncovering mechanisms generative of ethnic epiphenomena, and explores a neo-Durkheimian approach to conflict resolution. Specifically, Mary Douglas’s ideas on ring composition are extended to include the ethnomusicological project of the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, and then applied to epiphenomena emerging from the protracted civil conflict in the West African country of Sierra Leone.