This paper explores the relationship between continuity and change in the gift exchange of the Kanak people in New Caledonia. Drawing on concepts of personhood and agency, it examines the social relations and identities created in these exchanges. The main argument is that gift exchange is central to the social reproduction and social transformation of the person, groups and even the Kanak people as a whole. This was not only expressed in the opening ceremony of the Cultural Centre Tjibaou in Noumea in 1998 when Kanak representatives of all cultural areas accepted and supported the Centre by giving gifts, but also in the French term used in New Caledonia for gift exchange, "faire la coutume". In giving gifts, "en faisant la coutum", Kanak people "make" their social identity.