The emerging field of global health law has been developed with reference to two main discursive frames. A human rights frame which emphasizes solidarity and humanitarian concern; and a security frame which foregrounds the threat from (re-)emerging infectious diseases and other pathogenic factors. Scholarly work on global health law has significantly focussed on the elaboration of normative grounds for health promoting interventions at international and regional levels and by way of cross-border accountability. It has also mapped the legal field using theories of nodal governance and global legal pluralism. A critical legal perspective on the field has been slower to emerge, however. This paper argues that recent work by Mariana Valverde on ‘chronotopes of law’ offers the analytical tools for developing such a critique. By investigating the diverse spatio-temporal figures (or chronotopes) which structure legal doctrines and policy arguments we may better grasp the cultural and historical plausibility of interventions in the field, investigating the specific audiences which they constitute and privilege and those which they exclude. Drawing on research on infectious disease control and the regulation of traditional medicine in Kenya, the paper seeks to show the enduring persistence of colonial, developmental and imperial time-spaces in contemporary, ‘globalized’ health law.